REMARKS

Claims 1 - 3 are pending in this application. Reconsideration in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested. Applicant respectfully submits that this response is fully responsive to the Office Action dated **November 17, 2003**.

As To The Merits

As to the merits of this case, the Examiner now relies on the newly cited references of Davis et al. (U.S. Pub. No.: US 2002/0087430) and Johnson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,505,172) in setting forth the following rejections:

1) claims 1 and 3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Davis et al.; and

2) claims 2 and 3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Davis et al. in view of Johnson et al.

Each of these rejections is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 calls for said main server comprises: a user information storing means for mutually linking and storing identification information assigned to a user and an address of the subserver which controls the said user.

For example, as illustrated in Fig. 2 of the present application, a main server 10 includes a user storing section 19 that links the accepted data and identification information with address data of a subserver 30 installed in a region for controller a user.

With regard to this feature, the Examiner asserts that:

> Davis discloses a product information system in which a main server (10, i.e., the electronic commerce system) and a plurality of subserves (24/26, i.e., the electronic commerce systems of each individual merchant), each of the plurality of subservers is disposed in a set region, can be mutually connected via a network (36), wherein the said main server comprises: a user information storing means (38) for mutually linking and storing identification information assigned to a user and an address of a subserver which controls said user, see paragraph 22.[1]

However, the Examiner is mischaracterizing the teachings of Davis. That is, while Davis may disclose that a "customer database 38 may contain information on each customer 22 using the universal shopping basket 12,"[2] Davis fails to disclose that the customer database 38 contains information for mutually linking user information to an address of the subserver which controls the user.

Instead, according to Davis, "[t]his customer information includes information such as, for example, a customer name, preferred shipping addresses, preferred credit card information and a customer indentifer."[3] In other words, Davis fails to disclose any type of information in the customer database 38 for linking a customer to an address of a particular subserver which controls the customer.

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[1] Please see, lines 16 – 22, page 2 of the Action.
[2] Please see, paragraph [0022] of Davis.
[3] Please see, paragraph [0022] of Davis.

Moreover, <u>Davis</u> clearly discloses in Fig. 1 and in paragraph [0023] that a customer 22 by using the network interface 36 can directly view products on the electronic commerce system of each merchant 24, 26. Thus, since a customer can access the products of a merchant directly there is no need in <u>Davis'</u> system to include information for mutually linking user information to an address of the subserver which controls the user.

Thus, <u>Davis</u> clearly fails to disclose the feature of claim 1 concerning a said main server comprising a user information storing means for mutually linking and storing identification information assigned to a user and an address of the subserver which controls the said user.

Moreover, since <u>Davis</u> fails to disclose any type of linking information assigned to a user and an address of the subserver stored in the said main server, it follows that <u>Davis</u> also fails to disclose the additional features of claim 1 concerning a main server which includes a searching means for receiving identification from a user, searching through data stored in the said user information storing means, and obtaining an address of subserver which controls the said user; and a sending means for sending the address of the subserver obtained by the said searching means to a terminal unit of the user.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicant submits that that the claims are in condition for allowance. Applicant requests such action at an early date.
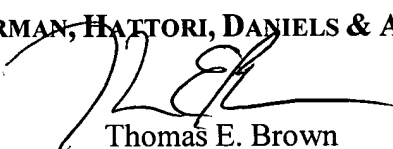
If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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